

Phil Scott (politician)

Philip Brian Scott (born August 4, 1958) is an American politician serving as the 82nd Governor of Vermont since 2017. A member of the Republican Party, he won the 2016 general election with 52 percent of the vote.^[1] In 2018, he won re-election to a second term by a wider margin.^[2] He was previously the 80th Lieutenant Governor of Vermont, an office he held from 2011 to 2017. Before serving as Lieutenant Governor, he was a State Senator representing the Washington County District from 2001 to 2011.

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Phil Scott



Scott in 2017

82nd Governor of Vermont

Incumbent

Assumed office

January 5, 2017

Lieutenant David Zuckerman

Preceded by Peter Shumlin

80th Lieutenant Governor of Vermont

In office

January 6, 2011 – January 5, 2017

Governor Peter Shumlin

Preceded by Brian Dubie

Succeeded by David Zuckerman

Member of the Vermont Senate from the Washington district

In office

January 5, 2001 – January 5, 2011

Serving with Bill Doyle, Ann Cummings

Preceded by Jeb Spaulding

Succeeded by Anthony Pollina

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Early life

Scott was born on August 4, 1958 in Barre, Vermont.^[3] He graduated from Barre's Spaulding High School in 1976,^[4] and is also a 1980 graduate of the University of Vermont, where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Education.^[5]

Business career

After graduating from high school, Scott began working at DuBois Construction, a Middlesex business which was founded by his uncle. Scott became a co-owner in 1986.^{[6][7]} Scott is a past President of the Associated General Contractors of Vermont.^[7] On January 6, 2012, a fire at DuBois Construction caused substantial damage,^{[8][9]} but the owners were able to rebuild and continue operations.^[10]

After being elected as governor, Scott sold his share of the company to avoid possible conflicts of interest, since DuBois Construction does business with the State of Vermont. He sold his 50% share for \$2.5 million plus three percent interest, payable over 15 years.^[11] Scott indicated that he opted to finance the sale himself rather than having the company borrow the money to pay him in full in order to preserve the company's bonding capacity.^[12] Critics suggested that Scott's sale of his share in the company doesn't completely eliminate possible conflicts of interest, but Scott and the attorney who negotiated the sale on his behalf disagreed.^[12]

Political career

Vermont Senate

As Republican, Scott was elected to the Vermont Senate in 2000, one of three at-large senators representing the Washington County Senate District. He was reelected four times, and served from 2001 to 2011. During his Senate career, he was the Vice-Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee and Chair of the Senate Institutions Committee. He also served as a member of the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee.^[13] As Chair of the Senate Institutions Committee, Scott redesigned the Statehouse cafeteria to increase efficiency.^[14]

During his time in the Senate, Scott served on several special committees, including the Judicial Nominating Board, the Legislative Advisory Committee on the State House, the Joint Oversight Corrections Committee, and the Legislative Council Committee.^[15]

Lieutenant Governor

Personal details	
Born	Philip Brian Scott <div>August 4, 1958</div> Barre, Vermont, U.S.
Political party	<u>Republican</u>
Spouse(s)	Diana McTeague
Children	2
Education	<u>University of Vermont</u> (BS)
Occupation	Construction company owner
Website	<u>Government website</u> (http://gove mnor.vermont.gov)

On November 2, 2010, Scott was elected the 79th Lieutenant Governor of Vermont.^[16] he defeated Steve Howard and assumed office on January 6, 2011. He was reelected in 2012, defeating Cassandra Gekas, and elected for a third term in 2014, defeating Dean Corren.

As lieutenant governor, Scott presided over the Vermont Senate when it was in session. In addition, he served as a member of the committee on committees, the three-member panel which determines Senate committee assignments and appoints committee chairpersons and vice chairpersons. In the event of a tie vote in the Vermont Senate, Scott was tasked with casting a tie-breaking vote. Scott also served as acting governor when the governor was out of state.^[17]

As a state senator and as lieutenant governor, Scott was active with a number of community service projects. In 2005, he founded the Wheels for Warmth program, which buys used car tires and resells safe ones, with the profits going to heating fuel assistance programs in Vermont.^[18]



Scott in 2016

Job approval as Lieutenant Governor

In September 2015, Scott maintained high name recognition and favorability among Vermont residents. A poll conducted by the Castleton University Polling Institute found that more than three-quarters of Vermonters knew who Scott was, and that among those who were able to identify him, 70% viewed him favorably.^[19] Despite being a Republican himself, the same poll found that 59% of self-identified Democrats held a favorable view of Scott, while only 15% held an unfavorable view of him.^[19]

National Lieutenant Governors Association

Scott was an active member of the National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA), and served on the NLGA Executive Committee and the NLGA Finance Committee.^{[20][21]} As a member of the NLGA, Scott joined fellow Lieutenant Governors across the country in two bi-partisan letters opposing proposed cuts to the Army National Guard in both 2014 and 2015.^{[22][23]} Scott was a lead sponsor on a NLGA resolution to develop a long-term vision for surface transportation in the United States.^[24] Scott was also a co-sponsor on resolutions to recognize the importance of arts and culture in tourism to the U.S. economy, to support Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education, to support designating a National Arts in Education Week, and to support a comprehensive system to end homelessness among U.S. veterans.^{[25][26][27][28]}

Governor of Vermont

2016 campaign for Governor

In September 2015, Scott announced his candidacy for Vermont Governor.^[29]

An early 2016 poll commissioned by Vermont Public Radio and conducted by the Castleton University Polling Institute indicated that among the two candidates for the Republican nomination for governor, Scott was preferred by 42% of respondents compared to 4% for candidate Bruce Lisman.^[30] A poll commissioned by Energy Independent Vermont in late June 2016 indicated that Scott had the support of 68% of Republicans, while Lisman had the support of 23% of Republicans.^[31]

On May 8, 2016, Scott received the endorsements of nearly all the Vermont Republican legislators.^[32] Scott did not support President Donald Trump in his 2016 presidential campaign.^[33]

On August 9, Scott defeated Lisman in the primary election by a margin of 21 percentage points.^[34] He defeated Sue Minter, the Democratic Party nominee, in the November general election by a margin of 8.7 percentage points.^{[35][36]}

Governorship

Fraud case settlement

On April 13, 2017, Governor Scott announced a \$150 million settlement in the ongoing case of alleged fraud relating to the Jay Peak and Burke Mountain EB-5 developments.^[37]

Job approval

According to a Morning Consult poll released in October 2017, Governor Scott's approval rating stood at 60%, making him the 7th most popular governor in the United States. The poll was conducted between July 1, 2017 and September 30, 2017 and has a margin of error of 4%. In April 2018, another Morning Consult poll indicated that Governor Scott's approval rating had risen to 65%, making him the 4th most popular Governor in the country.^[38] However, his favorability ratings had fallen to 52% by May 2018,^[39] and to 47% by July, marking the largest decrease in popularity by any governor in the nation.^[40] By April 2019, Scott's approval rating had recovered to 59% with a 28% disapproval rating, making him the 5th most popular governor in the United States with a net approval of 31%.^[41]

Political positions

Scott is a liberal or moderate Republican.^[42] As a candidate and Governor, he is known to "embrace moderate and sometimes even liberal policies;"^[43] his views can be described as "fiscally conservative but socially liberal".^[44] Describing his views, Governor Scott explained: "I am very much a fiscal conservative. But not unlike most Republicans in the Northeast, I'm probably more on the left of center from a social standpoint ... I am a pro-choice Republican."^[45] Scott supported the impeachment inquiry into Donald Trump that began in September 2019.^[46]

Fiscal and budgetary issues

Scott pledged to veto any budget that grows faster than the growth rate of the underlying economy or wages in the previous year, or one that increases statewide property taxes. Conflicts over raising property tax rates, which the Legislature supported and Scott opposed, led to a strained relationship between Scott and the largely Democratic State Legislature in 2018 for the FY19 budget, despite high revenues overall.^[47]

Scott has made addressing Vermont's long-term unfunded liabilities a priority, and has worked with Vermont's State Treasurer Beth Pearce to pay down Vermont's pension debt.^[48]

Taxes and fees

The FY18 budget signed into law by Scott did not include any new or increased taxes or fees. He has said that he opposes any new taxes being passed by the state legislature.^[49] He also refused to sign a bill that would have raised property taxes.^[50] Scott vetoed the FY19 budget twice before allowing it to go into law without his signature, as the threat of a government shutdown approached.^{[51][52]}

In early 2018, Scott called for eliminating the tax on Social Security benefits. House legislators incorporated a modified form of this proposal into the final FY19 budget, eliminating the tax for low- and middle-income retirees.^[53] Additionally, the tax reform planned by Scott (which was ultimately implemented) also lowered state income tax rates by 0.2 percent for all brackets; tied Vermont's tax system to Adjusted Gross Income (AGI); created Vermont-defined income deductions and personal exemptions similar to the federal tax code; increased the state Earned income tax credit by three percentage points; and added a new five percent charitable contribution tax credit.^[54] Additionally, Scott's Administration has reduced both Workers' Compensation and Unemployment Insurance tax rates.^[55] Scott has twice proposed to phase out the tax on military retirement income, which was not advanced by the Democratic Legislature.^{[56][57]}

Economic development

Scott has set a goal to boost the state's economy by increasing the state's population to 700,000 in 10 years, by encouraging young people who come to study in the state to remain after graduation.^[58] University of Vermont economics professor Arthur Woolf Scott suggested that retention of older Vermonters, with larger incomes and tax revenues, would be a better focus, but Scott pointed to the lower average healthcare costs associated with a younger population.^[59]

Scott's economic development plan has largely focused on workforce development and economic incentives. Scott has advocated for and achieved increasing in tax credits for development, new support for small business, additional initiatives for rural economic growth, Tax increment financing, permitting reform, and tax exemptions in key industries.^[60] Scott has made expanding the labor force a key priority of his administration, and has proposed and achieved initiatives that invest in workforce recruitment, retention, and relocation.^[61]

Health care

Scott signed a bill requiring Vermonters to have health insurance, making Vermont among a few states to implement such a policy after the federal repeal of the individual mandate provision of the Affordable Care Act.^[62] However, in part due to Scott's opposition to a financial penalty for an individual mandate, the Legislature passed and Scott signed a bill that would simply require attestation for the purchase of health insurance coverage.^[63]

Scott has advocated for moving away from a fee-for-service based health care system, and has suggested focusing more on the quality of care and services rendered. This model has been implemented on a pilot base with an Accountable care organization.^[64]

Education

Scott has called for modifying Act 46 to improve cost containment measures, incorporate property tax reduction, preserve local control and school choice, and allow communities to keep the funds they save through school district mergers.^[65] Scott has expressed support for flexible learning plans and the utilization of new technologies in the classroom in order to improve educational outcomes.^[65]

Scott's FY18 budget made investments in education, including a \$3 million increase in the base appropriation to the Vermont State Colleges to stabilize tuition and a new position in the Agency of Education to focus on career and technical education.^[66] The budget also expanded a base appropriation for child care financial assistance by \$2.5 million.^[67] The FY20 budget Scott signed into law built on these investments, with an additional \$7.4 million for child care and \$3 million more for higher education.^[68] The following year, Scott worked with the Legislature to eliminate tuition for members of the Vermont National Guard.^[67]

As a state senator, Scott voted for legislation to reduce education property tax rates.^{[69][70]} Scott's FY18 budget froze property tax rates, and the FY19 budget froze residential property tax rates.^{[66][71]}

Gun rights

Scott passed legislation that banned bump stock devices, expanded background checks for gun purchases, raised the age to purchase firearms to 21 (with certain exemptions), limited the purchase of certain high-capacity magazines, strengthened laws to keep guns out of the hands of alleged domestic abusers, and created risk protection orders.^[72] Scott created a Violence Prevention Task Force, ordered a security assessment of all Vermont schools, and signed legislation appropriating \$5 million for school security grants.^[73]

Government reform and modernization

Scott supports limiting the length of the annual Vermont legislative session to 90 days. According to Scott, the unpredictable and long length of the legislative session discourages everyday Vermonters from running for office.^[74] A 90-day session, according to Scott, would encourage more individuals to run for elected office by setting clear parameters.^[74] Furthermore, Scott states that a 90-day session would force the legislature to focus on key fiscal and operational issues.^[74]

As Governor, Scott created a Government Modernization & Efficiency Team to implement efficiency audits, strengthen IT planning, implement a digital government strategy, and identify opportunities to eliminate inefficiencies, establish clear metrics and streamline services.^[75] Scott also created the Program to Improve Vermont Outcomes Together (PIVOT) initiative, which asks frontline state employees for ways to make systems in state government more efficient and easier to use.^[66] Scott consolidated IT functions in state government with the creation of the Agency of Digital Services, saving taxpayers \$2.19 million.^{[66][76]} Scott also merged the Department of Liquor Control and the Lottery Department into the Department of Liquor and Lottery in order to achieve cost savings.^[76] Scott's Administration has worked to achieve internal improvements through lean training and permit process improvements.^[76] Scott also successfully sought to eliminate and merge redundant boards, commissions, studies and reports.^[76]

Transportation

In July 2016, Scott outlined his transportation priorities that he would implement as Vermont Governor.^[77] Scott indicated that he would strengthen the link between economic growth and Vermont's infrastructure; oppose additional transportation taxes, including a carbon tax; oppose accumulating additional state debt for transportation; encourage innovation in transportation through implementing a Research and Development (R&D) Tax Credit and an Angel Investor Tax Credit (a 60% credit toward cash equity investments in Vermont businesses, specifically targeted toward transportation, energy and manufacturing firms); protect the state's transportation fund to ensure it is used for transportation purposes only; advocate for federal reforms and flexibility in transportation policy; and update the Agency of Transportation's long-range plan for transportation.

Drug addiction policy

As Governor, Scott created an Opioid Coordination Council, appointed a director of drug policy and prevention, and convened a statewide summit focused on growing the workforce to support opioid and substance abuse treatment.^[66] To further treatment options, Scott worked with the Secretary of State's Office of Professional Regulation to streamline the licensing process for treatment professionals.^[78] Scott boosted efforts to reduce the drug supply through the Vermont Drug Task Force, Drug Take Back days, and expanding prescription drug disposal sites.^[78]

Social issues

Scott is pro-choice and supports same-sex marriage.^[79] He signed into a law a gender-neutral bathroom bill intended to recognize the rights of transgender people.^[80] Speaking about the new law, he said "Vermont has a well-earned reputation for embracing equality and being inclusive".^[81] Scott also signed gun control legislation that "limits some aspects of gun possession and empowers authorities to remove guns from people who may be dangerous".^[82]

On May 24, 2017, Scott vetoed a bill that would have legalized marijuana recreationally in Vermont.^[83] He has also opposed the Trump administration's immigration policies. In 2017, he signed a bill to limit the involvement of Vermont police with the federal government in regards to immigration,^[84] and the Department of Justice notified Vermont that it has been preliminarily found to be a sanctuary jurisdiction on November 15, 2017.^[85] He opposed the Trump administration's 'zero tolerance' policy and the separation of families at the border.^[86]

In June 2019, Governor Scott signed into law an abortion rights bill.^[87]

Environmental issues

Scott approved \$48 million for clean water funding in 2017.^[88] Scott signed an Executive Order creating the Vermont Climate Action Commission.^[89] Scott announced a settlement with Saint-Gobain to address water quality issues and PFOA contamination in Bennington County.^[90] Scott's FY18 budget proposal called for a tax holiday on energy efficient products and vehicles.^[91] On June 2, 2017, Phil Scott led Vermont to join the United States Climate Alliance, following President Trump's decision to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement.^[92] Scott committed to achieving 90% renewable energy by 2050.^[93] In 2019, Scott signed several pieces of legislation related to water quality, including creating a long-term funding mechanism for cleaning up the state's waterways, testing for lead in schools and child care centers, and regulating Perfluorooctanoic acid and related PFAS chemicals in drinking water.^{[94][95][96]}

Racing career

Scott is a champion stock car racer.^[7] He won the 1996 and 1998 Thunder Road Late Model Series (LMS) championships and the 1997 and 1999 Thunder Road Milk Bowls.^[7] (The Milk Bowl is Thunder Road's annual season finale.)^[7]

In 2002, he became a three-time champion, winning both the Thunder Road and Airborne Late Model Series track championships and the American Canadian Tour championship.^[7] (Airborne Park Speedway is a stock car track in the town of Plattsburgh, New York).^[97] He also competed in the 2005 British Stock Car Association (BriSCA) Formula One Championship of the World, but did not finish.^[98]

On July 6, 2017, Scott won the Thunder Road Late Model Series feature race; he started from the pole, and the victory was his first since 2013.^[99] Scott participated in a limited number of Thunder Road events in 2019, and won the June 27, 2019 LMS feature race.^[100] As of July 2019, Scott has 31 career wins, which places him third all time in Thunder Road's LMS division.^[101]

Personal life

Scott lives in Berlin, Vermont with his wife, Diana McTeague Scott, and their two dogs.^[102] He has two adult daughters, Erica and Rachael.^{[102][103]}

Electoral history

Results

2018 Vermont gubernatorial election ^[104]				
Party	Candidate	Votes	%	±
Republican	Phil Scott (incumbent)	151,261	55.19%	+2.28%
Democratic	Christine Hallquist	110,335	40.25%	-3.91%
Independent	Trevor Barlow	3,266	1.19%	N/A
Independent	Charles Laramie	2,287	0.83%	N/A
Independent	Cris Ericson	2,129	0.78%	N/A
Earth Rights	Stephen Marx	1,855	0.68%	N/A
Liberty Union	Emily Peyton	1,839	0.66%	-2.17%
<i>n/a</i>	Write-ins	1,115	0.41%	-0.31%
Total votes		'274,087'	'100.0%'	N/A
Republican hold				

2016 Vermont gubernatorial election^[105]

Party	Candidate	Votes	%
Republican	Phil Scott	166,249	52.9%
Democratic	Sue Minter	138,935	44.2%
Liberty Union	Bill Lee	8,808	2.8%
Total votes		313,992	100%

2016 Vermont Republican Party gubernatorial primary^[106]

Party	Candidate	Votes	%
Republican	Phil Scott	27,669	60.50%
Republican	Bruce Lisman	18,055	39.50%
Republican	<i>Write-ins</i>	48	0.22%
Total votes		45,772	100.00%

2014 Vermont Lieutenant Governor general election^[107]

Party	Candidate	Votes	%	Winner
Republican	Phil Scott	118,949	62.2	✓
Progressive/Democratic	Dean Corren	69,005	36.1	
Liberty Union	Marina Brown	3,347	1.7	

2012 Vermont Lieutenant Governor general election^[108]

Party	Candidate	Votes	%	Winner
Republican	Phil Scott	162,608	57.2	✓
Democratic	Cassandra Gekas	114,885	40.4	
Liberty Union	Ben Mitchell	6,964	2.4	

2010 Vermont Lieutenant Governor general election^[109]

Party	Candidate	Votes	%	Winner
Republican	Phil Scott	116,198	49.4	✓
Democratic	Steve Howard	99,843	42.5	
Independent	Peter Garritano	8,627	3.7	
Progressive	Marjorie Power	8,287	3.5	
Liberty Union	Boots Wardinski	2,228	0.9	

2010 Vermont Lieutenant Governor Republican Party primary election^[110]

Party	Candidate	Votes	%	Winner
Republican	Phil Scott	15,981	56.1	✓
Republican	Mark Snelling	12,389	43.5	

2008 Washington County Senate District general election^[111]

Party	Candidate	Votes	Winners
Republican	Phil Scott	15,763	✓
Democratic	Ann Cummings	15,291	✓
Republican	Bill Doyle	15,089	✓
Democratic	Kimberly B. Cheney	11,673	
Democratic	Laura Day Moore	10,847	
Republican	John R. Gilligan	5,660	

2006 Washington County Senate District general election^[112]

Party	Candidate	Votes	Winners
Democratic	Ann Cummings	14,416	✓
Republican	William "Bill" Doyle	12,994	✓
Republican	Phil Scott	12,595	✓
Democratic	Kimberly B. Cheney	11,685	
Democratic	Donny Osman	11,154	
Republican	Jim Parker	7,573	

2004 Washington County Senate District general election^[113]

Party	Candidate	Votes	Winners
Republican	William "Bill" Doyle	16,274	✓
Democratic	Ann Cummings	16,134	✓
Republican	Phil Scott	13,294	✓
Democratic	Kimberly B. Cheney	13,064	
Democratic	Michael Roche	9,242	
Republican	J. Paul Giuliani	9,194	

2002 Washington County Senate District general election^[114]

Party	Candidate	Votes	Winners
Republican	William "Bill" Doyle	13,017	✓
Democratic	Ann Cummings	11,213	✓
Republican	Phil Scott	10,849	✓
Republican	J. Paul Giuliani	8,982	
Democratic	Kimberly B. Cheney	8,450	
Democratic	Charles Phillips	6,822	

2002 Washington County Senate District Republican Party primary election

Party	Candidate	Votes	Winners
Republican	William "Bill" Doyle	1,725	
Republican	J. Paul Giuliani	1,556	
Republican	Phil Scott	1,547	
Republican	George Corey	587	

2000 Washington County Senate District general election^[115]

Party	Candidate	Votes	Winners
Republican	William "Bill" Doyle	15,298	✓
Republican	Phil Scott	13,412	✓
Democratic	Ann Cummings	12,220	✓
Republican	J. Paul Giuliani	11,997	
Democratic	Warren F. Kitzmiller	11,378	
Democratic	Paul N. Poirier	10,276	

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External links

- Governor Phil Scott (<http://governor.vermont.gov>) official government site

- **Phil Scott for Governor** (<https://www.philscott.org>) official campaign site
- **Phil Scott** (https://curlie.org/Regional/North_America/United_States/Vermont/Government/Executive/Governor_Phil_Scott) at Curlie
- **Profile** (<https://web.archive.org/web/20090530043035/http://vermont-elections.org/2009-2010BioBooks-wash.htm>), vermont-elections.org; accessed September 13, 2015.
- **Thunder Road International Speedbowl** (<http://www.thunderroadspeedbowl.com>)
- **American-Canadian Tour (ACT)** (<http://www.acttour.com>)
- **Appearances** (<https://www.c-span.org/person/?phillipscott>) on C-SPAN

Vermont Senate

Preceded by Jeb Spaulding	Member of the Vermont Senate from the Washington County at-large district 2001–2011 Served alongside: Bill Doyle , Ann Cummings	Succeeded by Anthony Pollina
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Political offices

Preceded by Brian Dubie	Lieutenant Governor of Vermont 2011–2017	Succeeded by David Zuckerman
Preceded by Peter Shumlin	Governor of Vermont 2017–present	Incumbent

Party political offices

Preceded by Scott Milne	Republican nominee for Governor of Vermont 2016, 2018, 2020	Most recent
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U.S. order of precedence (ceremonial)

Preceded by Mike Pence <i>as Vice President</i>	Order of Precedence of the United States Within Vermont	Succeeded by Mayor of city in which event is held
		Succeeded by Otherwise Nancy Pelosi <i>as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives</i>
Preceded by Gina Raimondo <i>as Governor of Rhode Island</i>	Order of Precedence of the United States Outside Vermont	Succeeded by Andy Beshear <i>as Governor of Kentucky</i>

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